

predominance of tree species of dry sites rather than those of moist sites. It is a closed-canopied forest that occurs on upland flats, ridges, and upper slopes on dry, moderately acid soils. It is often dominated by numerous dry site oak and hickory species, but most frequently white oak, southern red oak, or post oak prevail. Pines may reflect natural plant succession or be indicative of previous clearing and disturbance. The sparse to moderately dense understory often contains sourwood, red maple, black gum, American holly, and flowering dogwood. The shrub layer is usually sparse, patchy, and often includes hillside blueberry (*Vaccinium pallidum*), deerberry (*Vaccinium stamineum*), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), other heaths, and mapleleaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*). Herbs are sparse to moderately dense and frequently include pipsissewa (*Chimaphila maculata*), heartleaf (*Hexastylis* spp.), northern oat grass (*Danthonia spicata*), tick-trefoil (*Desmodium* spp.), bellworts (*Uvularia* spp.), and greater coreopsis (*Coreopsis major*). The community type often grades to Dry-Mesic Oak--Hickory Forest or Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest downslope and to Chestnut Oak Forest upslope or on drier soils. No rare plant species are strongly associated with this community type in Stokes County, though rare species of Chestnut Oak Forests such as large witch-alder (*Fothergilla major*) and sweet pinesap (*Monotropsis odorata*) are possibilities.

Dry-Mesic Oak--Hickory Forest

Dry-Mesic Oak--Hickory Forest is another of the most common community types in the Piedmont. However, extensive, high quality examples are increasingly scarce. It is similar to Dry Oak--Hickory Forest, but differs in having a canopy dominated more by tree species of moister sites. It is a closed-canopied forest that occurs on upland flats, ridges, and slopes on fairly deep, moderately acid, well-drained soils which are moderately dry. It supports a closed canopy of oak and hickory species, often with a predominance of white oak. Other dominant trees may include red oak, black oak, mockernut hickory, pignut hickory, or red hickory. The best examples are those without a predominance of tulip tree, Virginia pine, or sweet gum, whose presence increases after clearing. The understory often contains red maple, flowering dogwood, sourwood, American holly, or black gum, with numerous other species possible. A sparse, patchy shrub layer often supports strawberry-bush (*Euonymus americana*), blueberries (*Vaccinium* spp.), great rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*), mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), mapleleaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*), and hazelnut (*Corylus* spp.). Herbs are moderately dense and may include downy rattlesnake-plantain (*Goodyera pubescens*), heartleaf (*Hexastylis* spp.), black cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*), tick-trefoil (*Desmodium* spp.), and bellworts (*Uvularia* spp.). This community type grades to Dry Oak--Hickory Forest on drier, more exposed slopes; to Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest on more sheltered, mesic slopes; or to Piedmont/Low Mountain Alluvial Forest along small streams.

Mesic Mixed Hardwood Forest (Piedmont Subtype)

This common Piedmont community type typically occurs on moist, fairly deep soils on sheltered middle and lower slopes, frequently those that are north-facing. It may have relatively high species diversity on soils that are rich due to leaching of nutrients from areas higher on the